1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
AW42 Santal AW42

ported here. The origin of the Santal is attributed to a goose (*hāṣ*; Hindi, *hamsa* = gander) and a gander (*hāṣil*; Hindi, *hamsa* = gander) which were made out of grass seeds (*sirom*) or lived in such grass. With the assistance of the deity known by the Bengali terms *Ṭhakur* or *Mahaprobu* or *Ṭhakur-Mahaprobu*, or by the Santali *Marañ Buru* (literally "Great Mountain") the two eggs of the pair became the first "humans," i.e., Santal or *hoṛ*. Like many other tribal peoples, the Santal refer to themselves as "people" (*hoṛ*). Since there were no others, these two, in spite of being siblings, had to mate. It is said that Ṭhakur had to teach them how to make rice beer (*Haṇdi*) at this time so that they would get drunk since they were ashamed to have intercourse when sober, especially since they were siblings. There is often a lengthy account of the places to which this pair traveled, and the offspring they had at various places are named. Hihiri and Pipiri are always included prominently in these travels. The two ancestors are named Pilcu Haṛam and Pilcu Buḍhi (Hindi, *Hār* = bone) (Hindi, *Buḍhi* = old and/or wise), and they are said to have divided their offspring into twelve clans on the basis of various adventures. Sometimes these adventures are connected with the clan name and totemic food abstinence. The one occasion on which I heard a full account of the myth, unsolicited, was at a wedding, and it is clear from my inquiries that few present knew as much of the myth as was then recited.

The essential features of this myth are shared with the Ho and Munda, two closely related tribes speaking related Mundari languages and inhabiting territories adjacent to the Santal, or living intermingled with them. Other points of overlap between the Santal and these neighboring tribes will be indicated in this chapter.

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
AW42 Santal AW42

the Santal" as Culshaw properly describes him.[4] Other "nationally" shared deities of the Grove are *Jaherera*, *Liṭa*, *Gōsāe Era* (Hindi: *Gosain* = pious one), *Mōṛeko* (the Five) and *Tureko* (the Six).*

Marañ Buru is regarded as a kind of chief deity, though that honor is sometimes ascribed to Cando (literally "moon," as in Hindi, *chand*) or Siń-Cando (sun-moon) to Ṭhakur, etc. The great variety of names associated almost haphazardly with the notion of "chief" or "biggest" deity is consistent with the acephalous Santal social structure. Nevertheless the Santal do manifest tribal solidarity, and though every house, local lineage, etc., has its own deities, Marañ Buru always receives his portion of sacrifices, gift offerings and prayer. This constitutes another link between the Santal and other Mundari tribes of the region, who share most of these deities.

Sinha has characterized Indian tribals as conceiving of the good life as one with "ample scope for indulgence in pleasure, while maintaining social obligations to corporate group or groups" (Sinha 1959:309). Culshaw similarly begins his chapter on "Dancing, Music, and Poetry" with the comment that the word "*raṣka* meaning 'pleasure' is often on the lips of the Santal, and it is dear to their hearts."[5] One could hardly begin such a chapter differently, for the traditional sense of the word "pleasure" (*raṣka*) makes it virtually synonymous with dancing

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[4] Culshaw, *ibid.*

* *Jaherera* is sometimes called *Jaher Buḍhi* ("Old Lady of the Sacred Grove") and is said to be the consort of Marañ Buru. *Liṭa* is prominent in hunting rites; the rainbow is referred to as the "bow of *Liṭa*." As for the Five and Six, not even the most erudite of the Santal seem to have any knowledge of them other than when they are to receive offerings and prayer.

[5] Culshaw, *ibid.*, 39.

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
AW42 Santal AW42

Chapter 2 External Solidarity

000 The "likenesses" of a particular people not only contribute to internal bonds of solidarity, but by virtue of their distinctiveness may also serve as a barrier against assimilation in surrounding societies. The more distinctive these likenesses, the more inconsistent with the culture of the surrounding societies, the better they serve to preserve solidarity.

181 The chief traits which have divided the Santal from their predominantly Hindu neighbors are the "pleasure" complex mentioned earlier and the practices of cow sacrifice and beef 535 eating. Among the practices associated with the pleasure complex the most conspicuous are public mixed dancing such as occurs at festivals and the drinking of rice beer, as well as its 648 ritual use. The Hindus regard Santal mixed dancing as an orgy, [535] although it is in fact no more promiscuous than Western mixed dancing and is certainly less sensuous than much of Hindu classical dancing. As for cow sacrifice and beef eating, the stringency of the Hindu attitude is well known; on many occa- • 171 sions armed force has been used to halt both. It is again significant that these distinctive traits are shared by the other

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
AW42 Santal AW42

• 171 Mundari tribes of the region, for the tribes are thereby bound to one another and set apart from the surrounding Hindu society.

Of course, there are many other distinctive practices which have contributed to external solidarity, two of the more important among them being the language spoken and the deities [177] worshiped. But the Hindus have demonstrated such a genius for incorporating alien cultures and societies that one cannot satisfactorily account for the maintenance of distinctiveness of the Santal and some other closely related tribes of the region on the basis of contrasting likenesses. To begin to understand the preservation of these societies it is necessary to shift to an historical perspective of the social relations between the tribal societies of the region and the increasingly dominant Hindu society.

177 563 All about the Santal are examples of formerly Mundari-speaking tribals who have become Hindus. Most conspicuous to the Santal are the Bhumij, numbering over a hundred thousand and living interspersed throughout the territory of the southern Santal. Still bearing Mundari clan names, and some few still speaking a dialect of Mundari, most are nevertheless socially Hindus. According to Sinha, who has done extensive field work among these people, the Bhumij in most regions regard themselves and are regarded by others as Hindus; this is supported by my own observations (Sinha 1956). Like other low castes, they are not often rigorously assigned a particular level in the caste hierarchy, but they do enter into active economic relations with the various Hindu castes of the region. Unlike the Santal, many regard the employment of such Hindu castes as Brahmans, barbers, and washermen as essential, and

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
AW42 Santal AW42

177 563 most speak only the regionally prevailing Indian language, i.e., Bengali, Hindi, or Oriya.[1]

177 563 • 171 One hears of a Bhumij chief of Barabhum who claimed to be a Rājput Kṣatriya and employed degraded Brahmans. In Manbhum thirty years ago there was a Bhumij Kṣatriya who was a large landlord and who protested against his enumeration in the census as a *Bannya Jai* (Hindi = "wild tribe"); he claimed that his rituals conformed with high-caste Hindu standards. He and his retainers who were served by Brahmans and by members of other Hindu castes regarded themselves as superior to the "unclean" artisan and servant castes but inferior to the priestly Brahman and Boishtom castes. Apparently, there is considerable confusion among the "other" Hindu castes as to the rank of this group of Bhumij. Only twenty years ago the women of these Bhumij joined in public mixed dancing and the men still sacrificed chicken at their Sarhul festival. Nevertheless their Pargana was becoming endogamous and their clans had ceased to be exogamous.

Though Hinduization is general among the Bhumij and other tribals in the area, there is a tendency for those tribals who hold traditional offices and/or those who are wealthy to be more acculturated and assimilated than others.

In some regions occupational specialization has occurred, e.g., the Shelo Bhumij of Dhalbhum who are iron smelters and smithies, and the Shelo Kamar of Manbhum, who are blacksmiths and no longer regard themselves as Bhumij.[2] But the Bhumij are not the only tribe so affected, nor is the process of Hinduization confined to this or even simply the last century.

[1] Sinha *ibid.*
[2] Sinha *ibid.*

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
AW42 Santal AW42

177 563 171 As early as the sixteenth century a Munda tribal in the Ranchi district established himself as a local Rājā.[8] By virtue of his wealth and power he attracted reputable Brahmans to his court who Sanskritized his rituals and manufactured for him a Rājput genealogy. Eventually this status was accepted by other Rājputs and marriage ties were established.

177 563 There are numerous other examples, and the Santal themselves have undergone considerable Hindu acculturation and some fission and Hindu assimilation though not nearly to the same degree or in such large numbers as the Bhumij. Hindu-tribal contact in the region has been long and intense. All the tribes in the area have been heavily influenced by Hindu culture, some have been partially and others totally absorbed in the Hindu social order and no doubt many Hindu castes have been so recruited in instances where the historical record is unknown. Why the Bhumij have been assimilated and the Santal, Munda, Ho, and some others have not must be understood by reference to particular historical differences which are beyond the scope of this investigation. However, the examination of Santal historical experience does shed light on the general conditions which are relevant to assimilation as well as on the specific historical events which were crucial to the Santal experience.

175 648 669 Perhaps the single most important event in the history of Santal-Hindu relations was the Santal rebellion of 1855–57. This major public event, which first drew the serious attention of India's English rulers to the Santal, reveals at once the nature of Santal-Hindu relations and the strengths and limitations of Santal solidarity. Commemorated in Santal songs and

[8] Roy 1912.

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
AW42 Santal AW42

177 What began as a shift resulting from migration to industrial
178 employment and consequent weakening of traditional social
184 bonds may have affected the norms by lessening the stigma of
583 low status traditionally associated with the *NB*.
584 If one may use the term "modernization" to designate those indigenous developments or borrowings which are patently adaptive or characteristic of industrial urban societies, the shift to unarranged marriages with attenuated ceremonial is an example of modernization. Thus, while industrial development and migration to industrial employment have in a number of ways weakened Santal solidarity, the modernization which it has encouraged has in some respects suggested cultural alternatives not characteristic of traditional Hindu society. Insofar as this has been true, modernization has contributed to the maintenance of distinctiveness and solidarity and thereby inhibited
• [171] assimilation. Many aspects of modernization, however, are likely to be equally operative among Hindu and Santal, especially in the long run, so that the cultures are made more alike.*

The Decline of Ceremonies in Bustee *and City*

177 Even a casual observer might note that ceremonies in the
178 *bustee* as compared with those in the village are less well at-
184 tended and often attenuated. As for the city Santal, they prac-
796 tice no communal forms of worship like those traditionally performed at the "Sacred Grove" as long as they remain in the city; often they do not even perform ancestor worship in

[114] * Dr. Milton Singer called my attention to the significance of modernization with respect to my data on marriage and ceremonial and pointed out its significance in terms of acculturation and assimilation, though I am of course responsible for the form that his remarks have assumed above.

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
AW42 Santal AW42

your religion. Are you Hindu, Muslim, Christian, or what?" By this means the census-takers might obtain the desired result. However, it should be remembered that neither Culshaw, who is a Christian missionary, nor the presently very communally oriented Santal are disinterested observers.

There is no question that since the 1920's at least, Hindu organizations like Arya Samaj have actively campaigned to get tribals to declare themselves as Hindus. Such declarations were regarded as demonstrations of national unity and as refutations of the charge that India was so culturally and socially diverse as to be incapable of nationhood. In view of Hindu pressures and census irregularities, the returns reported may at the most indicate that Santals were finding it increasingly difficult to muster the solidarity to resist Hindu pressure for common religious identification. At the very least, the returns may simply reflect Hindu pressure generated by the Independence Movement.

In spite of the manifold pressures operating to weaken Santal solidarity, there are few cases of actual social absorption. Apparently, the endogenous forces contributing to solidarity have been sufficient to prevent this from happening. However, in view of the experience of other tribes and because of the increase in centrifugal pressures created by industrial employment, it appears that further social absorption was imminent. Certainly centrifugal pressures had increased, and if the political rank path had not suddenly reopened in the 1930's, it seems likely that the Santal would have become as Hinduized as their neighbors, the Bhumij.

[p. 3]

I. THE ANCESTORS' STORY

As the old Kolean has told it.

Towards the rising of the sun (the East) was the birth of man. At first there was only water, and under the water there was earth. Then Ṭhạkur[1]-Jiu created the beings that live in water, the crab, the crocodile, the alligator, the raghọṗ boaṛ fish, the sọlẹ prawn, the earthworm, the tortoise and others. 539

Thereupon Ṭhạkur said: "Whom shall I now make? I will make man". Then he decided to make two of earth. He had just finished making the two; then when he was going to give them souls (life) the Day-horse[2] came down from above, trampled them to pieces and left. Thakur became awfully grieved by this.

Then Ṭhạkur said: "I will not make them of earth; I shall make birds". Then he made the two Hās Hạsil birds[3] pulling (the material) off from his breast. He placed them on his hand; they were looking very beautiful. Thereupon he breathed on them, and they at once became alive and flew upwards. They moved about flying, but as they could not find a place to alight anywhere, they therefore always alighted on Ṭhạkur's hand. Then the Day-horse came down along the gossamer thread to drink water. When he was drinking water he spilt some froth of his mouth and left. It floated on the water; thereby foam was formed on the water.

Ṭhạkur then said to the two birds: "Do alight on the froth". They did so. When they had alighted they moved about over the whole sea, the froth carrying them along like a boat. Then they implored Ṭhạkur: "We are moving about, that is so, but we do not find any food".

Then Ṭhạkur-Jiu called the alligator: he came; and the alligator said to Ṭhạkur: "Why did you call me, Ṭhạkur?" Ṭhạkur said to him: "Would you be willing to bring up earth?" The alligator answered him: "If you tell me to do so, I might bring it up". Then having gone down in the water he was working bringing up earth; all was dissolved.

Thereupon Ṭhạkur called the prawn. He came. Having come he said to Ṭhạkur: "Why did you call me, Ṭhạkur?" Ṭhạkur said to him: "Would you be willing to bring up earth?" The prawn answered him: "If you tell me to do so, I might bring it up". Then

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[1] lit. 'the Lord'. [2] The Sin sadọm is mentioned only here and once below. Santals will connect the name with the sun. [3] Hās is the Hindi name for goose or swan; hạsil is the female. Other Muṇḍā peoples have a similar story; the Muṇḍās have only one egg, out of which both the first human beings were hatched.

[192]
[171]

3t Mukherjea O. Y-4, 8 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42

162 increase was abnormally low. It was a little over
[164] 3 per cent. The influenza epidemic was responsible for this result. In the present Census, the rate of growth has been nearly by 17 per cent."[1] The total variation in the Santal population of Mayurbhanj from 1891 to 1931 is + 166,705.

162 As regards literacy amongst the Mayurbhanj
212 Santals, it may be noted that while in 1911, there were 720 literate males and 38 literate females, the number of literate males and females in 1921 stood at 970 and 12 respectively. In 1931, however, the numbers rose to 2,044 males and 32 females.

162 Summing up, it may be said that the Santal
212 literates constitute 0·78 per cent out of their total
• 171 strength in Mayurbhanj, whereas, the Gonds record 3·37 per cent. This may also be usefully compared with the literacy figures of one of the Hindu castes viz. Kayasthas in Mayurbhanj which reach 36·39 per cent.

162 Out of the other Orissa states, it is gathered that Nilgiri contains 3,235 and Keonjhar 16,172 Santals according to the Census of 1931; and in both these states, the net variation from the year 1891 to 1931 was + 2,901 and + 14,446 respectively.[2]

[113] 1. Ref. *Mayurbhanj Census Report*, 1931, Vol. I, p. 151.

2 These figures were kindly supplied by Mr. P. K. Dass, Asst. Secretary, Mayurbhanj State.

3t Mukherjea O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42

462 512 go with their cattle to look after their agriculture. [264] It is about 9 a.m. that they can think of a breakfast, when the women convey to the fields a plate of [262] "Bàsiàm damari" (*rice soaked in water and kept over-*[263] *night*) which they eat with relish with a pinch of salt and some "sang" (*fried leaves*) generally of "sajina" leaves. Now refreshed with a meal, they work on till midday. The women are in the meantime busy with the hearth, cook and clean the yards and houses with cow-dung. The men return from [264] the fields at noon and bathe and eat their noon-day meal, again of soaked rice and "sang." Now the [515] women can think of their food and this they take [264] after a bath and after the men have dined, exactly [171] like their Hindu sisters. It is now time for men to take some rest. They loll on "parkòms" (*stringed bed-steads*) and doze for a time and are off to their fields at about 2 p.m. in the afternoon. There they [517] dig, plough or sow till 4 p.m., and after returning from the fields go round the villages, visiting friends or indulge themselves in village sports. Meanwhile, [264] their wives cook their supper, draw water and husk paddy and again at about 5-30 p.m., the family take dinner, the same menu being repeated. The children are fed first, the men next, the women, last of all.

With evening, the Santals as a tribe shut themselves indoors. If you ask them, "Why do you retire so early?," They will perhaps answer with a bland

3t Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42

735 sorrows. It is a pathetic sight to see young Santals
293 keep sober till they marry, and then grow old sud-
154 denly as cares and anxieties of life come to them, when they plunge headlong in a sodden life.

181 The rigours of their life on the earth are somewhat overcome by the objects of material culture we have noted in the foregoing pages. But one can easily see that they are crude devices of a primitive world, not serving their purpose well in the twentieth century. But, one must however notice [171] that the level of culture presented by the Santal is on a par with that of the rest of the hill tribes of what may be called the Central Belt of India, which is a homogeneous culture-area in all important respects.

Conclusion

174 As we conclude the review of Santal economic
181 life, we find that the actual stage reached by the
224 tribe in its material culture is still primitive. Their
241 traditions make it clear that there was a time in the
433 life of the Santals when they lived a semi-hunting nomadic life, perpetually moving in quest of food. But the picture we have got in the foregoing pages reveals a people who have finally accepted the life of settled agriculturists.

177 As, however, we look closely to the objects of Santal material culture, we notice similarities with

3t Mukherjea O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1902
AW42 Santal AW42
MAYURBHANJ

CHAPTER IV

SOCIAL FABRIC

462 The very existence of society depends upon the
• 171 mutual co-operation of the sexes. This, however, varies from age to age and clime to clime. In Burma one will witness men-folk droning away their lives in fumes of cigar, while their fascinating mannish counterparts keep the balance by developing the male vigour for themselves. In rural Bengal one will see an opposite picture of women being gaoled in the hearth and home and not generally called upon to share the out-door life of the husband on quest of bread. But that the female can be the other half of the male, as the term a partner in life connotes, can be seen amongst the aboriginals, specially the Santals.

Division of Labour

462 Thus both the men and women can be seen
22 in Mayurbhanj to hunt and catch fish, gather fruits
462 and edible leaves. The Santal husband and wife
241 jointly engage in agriculture to transplant seedlings, to break clods and to reap corn. But here the roads part. Women do not sow seeds, but threshing is their special business and no man will undertake these tasks, unless he is without a woman member

3t Mukherjea O. Y-4, 8 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42

585 valent Hindu forms. Many of the ceremonials as
197 the application of vermilion to the bride's forehead, have been traced directly to Hindu influences.
585 This *sindur dan* or *sindrà dan* is a remnant of the
174 primitive custom of mixing the blood of the husband
197 and wife, which they either drank or daubed themselves with, as a symbol of an eternal union. As it is a queer problem to discover whether the egg came first or the hen was first, ethnologists have in their turn, traced Dravidian influences in the custom. Similarly, the marriage with a *mòhua* [171] tree, the race of the husband and wife while at the [588] ceremony, called *Kado ghata*, have their parallel in the customs of the Hindus of the Central belt.

II. LOVE MARRIAGE

(1) Raja Raji

583 The freedom of social intercourse that the [834] Santals allow to their boys and girls, naturally leads to many love-marriages ; but the Santals, even when in love, have to go through certain formalities
583 before living as man and wife. So we see that
584 when a couple feel the urge for matrimony, they go [622] to the house of the village Headman and inform him of their desire. The Headman now will take them to the house of the lover and there, in the presence of the village elders, the beloved is asked

31 Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS
MAYURBHANJ

the new corn with a similar prayer. The remainder of the millet, he takes home for himself.

The Millet Festival, called *Muchri*, exists in all its details in Mayurbhanj and is observed by the Santals there.

Gamah Purnima (August)

Side by side with these harvest-festivals, the Santals of Mayurbhanj observe *Gamah Purnima* on the full-moon of *Sravan* (August), when cows are fed with salt, *mohua* flowers, rice, the corrosive *bhela* fruit and a grass called *mutha*, their horns being copiously rubbed with oil. Thereafter, men and women dance round a Karam (*Adina Cordifolia*) branch, planted at the *akhra* (place for dance), a special *Karam* dance, and on the conclusion immerse it in water. Ancestors are also propitiated with offerings of rice-beer. The Santals observe the festival along with some of the Hindus. All wear new clothes and indulge in feasts and drinks, not forgetting to feed Brahmins and Vaishnavas.

Karam Pòròb (September-October)

This is a festival observed in September-October. The males of the village go after nightfall and cut a branch of a *Karam* tree (*Adina Cordifolia*,) which they fix in the village lane (*kulhi*) and round which the young people dance till morning, when the Karam branch is thrown into a tank.

31 Mukherjea O. 7-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS

of the audience. The feet of the successful cow are then ceremonially washed.[1]

The second day is devoted to the preparation of food for the different tribal gods, in whose honour animals like fowls, goats and pigs are sacrificed. Ancestor-spirits are also worshipped and their memory honoured and offerings and libations made to them at home by heads of families. The evening is spent in community feasts on a large scale with drinks of rice-beer offered to the gods and thereafter drunk by the members of the tribe.

The climax of the ceremonials reaches with the worship of cows (*Gohal Puja*). When all are sleeping, young men of the tribe keep vigil and go from place to place to awaken the cows, beginning with the Headman's house, playing on pipes and kettle-drums.

The following is a song sung on the occasion: —

Gàini còlilo siribinda bònè ho,
Màhisini carae gañga para jo yo re,
Màhisini carae gañga para jo.

---

1 E. G. Man, in his *Sonthalia and the Sonthals* (p. 57) in this connection refers to the Egyptian myth of the "Bull and the Egg." The ceremony consists in newly laid hen's eggs being placed on the village lane and oxen driven past, and the one who stoops to smell the egg is held in high estimation for the year. "I believe," says Man, "the Egyptian mythology states that the earth came out of an egg which the bull broke."

31 Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42

is intended. An exorcist is called in, who chants an incantation and allows his stick to strike all over the place. It is an unseen hand which guides him to the spot where the thing was buried. Soon they dig the place and unearth the uncanny deposit made by a malignant enemy, thus counteracting the spell cast. A peculiar instance of this nature is that when a man's cow yields a very large quantity of milk, a jealous enemy may bury milk itself, with the unholy hope that the process will diminish the supply. Similarly, if it is intended to bring harm to a man's harvest, rice is buried, and if a man's death is intended, a bone may be deposited in the earth.

754 756 789 789 578 [754]

Luck

Belief in luck is nothing special to the Santal. He has it in common with all the Mundà tribes and the semi-Hinduised people of the Central Belt, not to speak of the caste-Hindus, many of whose superstitions have a similar flavour.

777 [171]

The Santals credit some persons with possessing "the luck of the threshing-floor." Those who are thus blest gather more harvest than others, and when they thresh the paddy, more of grains and less of chaff come out. This gift, however, can be 'stolen' by malignant persons and there are special methods of approaching such problems.

[243]

3t Mukherjea O, Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1902
AW42 Santal AW42

and is then called a "Jan-Guru". As regards the second method, it is stated that there are several *Guru Boṅgas*. The man who is devoted to them and has faith on them sees them coming to him in dreams. He then knows that the *Boṅgas* are pleased with him and want his worship. If the pupil likes it, he offers vermilion and *dhup* (incense) in the names of the *Boṅgas*, he saw in his dream. The *Boṅgas* again appear before him in dreams and tell him of their powers and ask him to worship them. With the series of *Boṅgas* thus appearing before him, the pupil becomes *Koñka* (puzzled). He then goes to the *Boṅgathans* (the places where the *Boṅgas* live) and remains there for some days. He talks with the spirits and they assure him that whenever he remembers them, they will be at his beck and call and tell him whatever he wants to know. Thus getting his boon, the pupil returns home and continues to worship the *Boṅgas* and practise his power.

Conclusion

Magic and witch-craft are an essential part of the belief of most of the Hinduised tribes and the pre-Dravidian people resident in Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. Although it cannot be vouched for a certainty as to whether the Santals borrowed it wholesale from the Hindus, there is some internal

3t Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1952
AW42 Santal AW42
MAYURBHANJ

Apart from this, there are other games in which children have their first sex-contacts. Thus it was explained that in a game played by children in water, named *Jol Kada*, a boy or girl blows hard at a stick and keeps it immersed in water. Others raise waves with their hands and try to drown it. The child who gets the stick, swims away with it, while others try to snatch it away. The boy or girl who thus seizes the stick has to grapple with his or her mates and this mutual clasping, hugging and embracing lead undoubtedly to sexual stimulation. Similarly, there is the water-game, called *thep* (Oriya, Phutkuri) in which a boy or a girl makes a sound in water, while another outspreads his hands folded forwards. The boys or girls who cannot produce the sound, become the thief (Kombṛo). The thief then catches others. Those touched, become thieves in their turn, and the clasping by throwing the arms round in the consequent scuffle, affords sex-touches for juveniles, leading not unoften to attempts at juvenile cohabitation amongst the nude and semi-nude players. We gathered that sex-encounters of children are very common in fields while they tend cows or buffaloes, and the minimum age for such children was given as four to five.

In course of our enquiry, we could not come across any definite sexual entertainment of children as "Cow and Bull," "Cock and Hen," "Horse and

Jt Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42
MAYURBHANJ

864
857
[171] Mare," played with a wealth of detail as noted by Father Elwin in his "The Baiga." The juvenile games, indulged in by Santal children, resulting in sex-contacts and childish coitus are done openly. But, as Santal parents interfere in such games and chide the children while playing sexually, coitus is sometimes secretly indulged in. So it is that some Santals told us that children play sex-games privately and not before public gaze.

864 We should note that there are further equipments to the phallic knowledge of the Santals other than occasional glimpses of parental coitus or coitus generally seen after the Lagre*n* dances. A well-
[601] informed Santal told us that *Gòṛòmbaba*, (the grandfather of Santal children), the *teñae* (brother-in-law) or the Kumañ (father's sister's husband) explain the mysteries of sex to children of four to five years of age with occasional demonstration of process how to indulge in coitus. There are various other ways of initiation. Boys and girls sometimes understand the mysteries on mutual consultation about the supreme fact. Sometimes, old women teach the art to young girls and elder men to inexperienced lads. Even elder women, according to reliable testimony, belonging of course to the *rànḍi* (widow) and *chardi* (divorcee) class, teach the art to boys of 14 and 15.
[835] But to sexually inexperienced boys, the *guru* par
[601] excellence is the *bili* (elder brother's wife) with
[607]

4: Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS

and night. As a rule they cook their food outside, but always have a fire-place inside. During the cold season they generally cook their food inside, the result being that the house specially at night, is suffocatingly full of smoke and every thing becomes covered with soot. This does not, however, seem to affect the Santals much. In the bed-room they store their rice and all other belongings, and the fowls are kept too in that room at night. It is, of course, not possible to keep such a house clean, even if they tried to do so.

Agriculture :—The Santals before becoming agriculturists were probably in the hunting stage. Still, nothing pleases them so much as to be out for hunting, they even now observe the "Dehiri hunting", which is an annual hunt. During the time of the annual hunt the Dehiri priest performs certain ceremonies to propitiate "Sin Bonga" to avert calamity during hunting. All these suggest that prior to becoming agriculturists the Santals were in the hunting stage. At present the Santals are typical agriculturists. There is no authentic record when the Santal first started tilling the soil. Rev. Bodding in his memoir, "How the Santals live" has mentioned their first attempt at cultivation in the following words :—

"It is just possible that one of their first attempts to get something out of the soil may have been something like what is now called 'kurau', a mode of cultivation that is said to have been used also by Santals in former years, but is not practised by them at the present time, so far as is known. It is, however, still kept up by the Paharias living on the hills of the Santal country. A piece of jungle is cut down high up

4: Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS

241 on a steep hill-side; when the wood of the felled
171 trees is dry, generally toward the end of the hot season, it is burned. In this way the ground is cleared, and when the rains set in, the seed is sown without any ploughing. The present-day Paharias make small holes with a crow-bar and drop the seed into the holes, especially of bajra, Sorghum vulgare Pers., of maize and of a few other kinds. This is all, except that they may
241 pluck away weeds. It is said that when the Santals in former times followed a similar mode of cultivation they simply sowed the seed (especially bajra) at the top of the cleared hill-side, the spreading being left to the water of the rains flowing down; in some cases, a branch of a thorn-tree (Zizyphus Jujuba Lam.) is said to have been pressed into a flat shape and dragged over the ground to spread the seed".

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[46] From early morning till evening they work in the
[556] field. Rice is their staple food; in it wealth is reck-
[262] oned and from it they obtain their drink. Both sexes
[462] work in the field. Every man tries to secure agricultural fields near his house and also near a streamlet flowing. They cultivate their soil and also gather natural produce when their crops do not grow due to want of rain or for some other reasons. The Santals prepare two kinds of rice field. One type is adjoining their houses, the other is at some distance away from their houses, which is on high land.

Preparation of ricefield :— After selecting the site, the Santals clear the field of jungle and vegetation. Then they surround it with ridges but if the land is
[412] slopy then they make the ridge only on the lower
[407] side. With the hoe and a heavy leveller (karha) they

4: Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS

CHAPTER III

The Santal Social Organization

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Family: The family amongst the Santals should be of great interest considering that the Santals have been described as polyandrous. But besides the privileges of the younger brother over an elder brother's wife or the latitude allowed to the husband with the wife's younger sisters; there ought to have been traces of at least what has been called group-marriage. As the Santals could be taken as the representatives of a state of culture preceding the Dravidians in India and so be taken as a type of primitive patriliny, theoretically it should have shown the stages of family life which Morgan has described to be of pre-Aryan type. Linguistically, the Santals belong to what has been called the Austric group and thus would be the westernmost peripheral representatives of what is the Hawaiian type of family in the Pacific. In social structure also as well as in a sort of totemic organization the Santals recall several features of the Australian aboriginals. So an inquiry into the Santal family organization compared with the Hawaiian types or Australian systems or the polyandrous Nair or Tibetan types is necessary.

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Types of Family: Amongst the Santal generally two types of family can be seen:

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(1) The individual family consisting of father, mother, sons and daughters.

(2) The second consisting of grandfather, grandmother, sons, their wives, daughters (unmarried)

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4; Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS

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implements, and sets up a house for himself and his wife. This sort of son-in-law is called Ghardi-jawae.

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Family not Polyandrous: In the individual family the father is the *pater familias*, whereas in the other type the grandfather or any senior male member is head in every respect; other members, however senior they may be in age, must remain under his authority. In the Santal family all the brothers marry different wives (monogamous) which can be verified from the genealogical trees of the different Santal families. It is not like the normal Toda family which consists of a number of brothers—brothers with one wife, and each house belongs to a family of this kind and is handed on to the children of the brothers (Rivers' Toda, p. 559).

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There are no different terms of kinship for the father, father's brother, as also for mother and father's brother's wife which would not have happened, if there had been polyandry—

(Toda)	Father	... ...	In (aia).
,,	Father's brother	...	,,
,,	Mother	...	Av (ava)
,,	Father's brother's wife	...	,,

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A consideration of terms of kinship of the Santals side by side with that of the Todas shows that the terminology of the Santals is cast in the same way as amongst the Todas. The terms for father and the father's brother are the same, the only difference being marked by the addition of descriptive words like Gongo (elder) or Hopen (younger); so also the terms for

4: Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS

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[601] the father's brother's wife and of the mother are the same, only modified by the addition of descriptive terms, younger and elder. This might argue in favour of the existence of polyandry amongst the Santals. But the constitution of the family is entirely different. Amongst the Santals as distinguished from the
595 Todas each brother has a separate wife who is
171 always recognised as the partner of that brother only
851 and does not belong to all the brothers as amongst the Todas. When the child is born, there is no question of any difficulty of identity of the biological father, who is bound by individual marriage ties to its mother. This is quite different amongst the Todas, where a sociological fatherhood has to be determined by the bow and arrow ceremony of generally the eldest brother in the family, when a woman is with child. This sociologically recognised father may be quite different and is often so from the real biological father. But amongst the Santals the sociological and biological father is always
591 the same except in cases of adultery. Amongst the
171 non-fraternally polyandrous Nairs again, there was a custom of several husbands visiting a common wife in turn and leaving shoes, etc., outside for prohibiting the entry of other husbands. There is no trace of any such custom nor any matriarchy amongst the Santals, which would have been necessary for such a system of
587 non-fraternal polyandry. True, there is the custom of the junior levirate by which the husband's younger brother has marital right over the elder brother's widow. But this marriage can only take place when the elder brother is dead and there is no question of the younger brother marrying the elder brother's wife while he is
000 alive. Though there is a jocose relationship between

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Though there is a jocose relationship between them, the elder brother's wife is respected as mother. So also, the elder brother avoids even touching the shadow of the younger brother's wife, not to speak of her being regarded as the property of the elder brother. There is also the custom of sororate, by which a wife's younger sister could be married by the husband. But the wife's sister is generally and almost universally married to another. So it is possible that the identity of the terms of kinship for the father and father's brothers may be explained by the levirate. In such a case the father's brother's wife would be a second mother and so the terms of kinship for the mother and father's brother's wife, would be the same. Besides, the function of the father's elder brother's wife in a joint family system is more or less that of a supervising mother; so this also might explain the identity of the kinship terms.

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(Santal)	Father	... Apum, now also baba.
,,	Father's brother	... (Gongo) Apum (elder), (Hopen) Apum (younger).
,,	Mother	... (Ayo Gongo).
,,	Father's brother's Wife.	... (Gongo) Ayo (elder), (Hopen) Ayo (younger).

But the Santal family though apparently the same in structure of kinship terminology is quite different from the polyandrous Toda family. Comparing the families of these tribes it can be seen clearly that polyandry is not present amongst the Santals. Mr. Craven and the Rev. L. O. Skrefsrud have stated in J.A.S.B., Part 3,1903, pp. 88-90, that fraternal

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4: Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS

614 to the use of vermilion and may be due to the impor-
302 tant custom of smearing with vermilion on the occasion
184 of marriage and other auspicious ceremonies which once divided the Santals into two groups based on the use and non-use of vermilion. That this was the uppermost idea in the Santal's mind was forcibly impressed on me while taking their measurements and enquiring of their sub-septs; the majority came out with either Sada (white) or Nij (proper). Thus the sub-sept division not being exogamic is not so much a vital part of their social organization; rather it was a division
[174] due to culturtal difference. The possibilities are that once either the vermilion was a borrowed culture trait from outside or its use was given up by a section due to some internal reform movement or influence of some superior non-vermilion-using culture. It is more probable that the use of vermilion was more innate to them becuse the users are called the Nij or proper.
[585] Vermilion, it may be noted, is used by them only on
• [171] the occasion of marriage. Among the Bengal Hindus vermilion is not only used in marriage but has to be always worn on the parted hair of the married women, lack of vermilion signifying widowhood. On the other hand in other parts of Hindu India more stress is laid on the use of flowers by the married women. Vermilion is not known in the primitive area of Assam. Thus it is probably a vital part of the culture of Chota Nagpur tribes.

Notes on Sub-septs

614 THA-OR SUB-SEPT
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184 Whenever any ceremony (religious) occurs the members of this sub-sept sacrifice a goat or a pig in

4: Biswas D, F-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS

CHAPTER IV

RELIGION

Ceremonies and Festivals

The proper analysis of the religion of the Santals is as difficult as it is necessary for the history of succession of religious ideas in India and perhaps in the whole world. If there is any culture which still carries on the impress of the underlying philosophic speculation and order of thought that was widespread in India prior to the rise of the Dravidian culture, it was very likely the belief and social order of the Pre-Dravidian Santals.

In the study of the hypothetical development of religious ideas, the Santals figure prominently in the scheme of evolution. Thus Clodd cites them as an example of beliefs proceeding animism. He says :

'This is very interesting considering the sway of the ideas of impersonal universal spirit or mana so widely prevalent amongst the Austric-speaking people of which the Santals are a western peripheral branch. It is a subject for future enquiry, whether there had been any influence of Vedic or Upanishadic speculations of the universal supreme energy carried by these people in the migration eastward. There is a calling back of the shade of the departed common amongst those pre-Dravidian tribes of Chota-Nagpur which recalls the Vedic passages (Rigveda, Mandal 10)'.

The enquiries of Pater W. Schmidt, probably inspired by the subconscious Christian idea of an early revelation to primitive man of the idea of a supreme personal god, have led to the finding of many instances of the primitive high god in the first cultural strata of

4: Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS

114 food-gatherers. The Santals fall in the category of the
77 primary or secondary cultural strata in the scheme of
174 Pater Schmidt. The idea of a supreme being or a
•171 personal high god is well known amongst the primitive tribes of Central Provinces, Chota-Nagpur and Assam Thus according to Dalton, he is called Boro by the Kharias, Ote Boram or Sing Bonga by the Hos, Dula Deb or Pharsi Pen by the Gonds, Bura Penu or Bela Penu by the Khonds. In Assam, he is known as the Father by the Abors, as old bearded Rishi Salgong residing in heaven by the Garos, as the creator Pa-thian amongst the Kukis and the great god Arnam Kethe amongst the Mikirs. The enquiries of Sir James Frazer in his "Worship of Nature" have led him to cite most of the Chota-Nagpur tribes as devotees of the Sun god as the supreme being. Rai Bahadur S.C. Roy thus has analysed the Dharmes or Biri Bela of the Oraons as Sun god. Similarly, according to him, the Ber Pitia or Ber Chichha of the Malers is the Sun god and so also is the Bhagavan of the Korwas. The Bur a Penu of the Khonds is also the God of light.

114 Coming now to the Santals we find almost all the
77 authorities agreeing in conceding to them the idea of
176 a supreme being. But there is a great diversity of
174 opinion as to what he is called. According to Dalton, he is Sing Bonga amongst the Santals of Chota-Nagpur. Risley (Appendix VII, p. 446, People of India), on the authority of Skrefsurd, says that the supreme deity is called Thakur. E.G. Man, working in Orissa about fifty years ago, gives (Santhal and Santhalia, Chapter VI) the name of the supreme being of the Santals as Chando or Chando Bonga. Bompass (P. 402, Folklore of the Santal Parganas) in one of his folklores

41 Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS

756 knowledge of herbs as well as the mysterious processes of evil caused by malevolent natural or human agencies and profess to cure the Santal of his daily ailments [755] and afflictions. Thus magic ritualism is the speciality [789] of Santal society and centre of the individual's life, whereas the religious ceremonials are more or less com- 756 munal group affairs. The complicated cross section of 793 the Santal belief would be well studied in the functional 754 differentiation of the communal priest, the Ato naeke, 791 his assistant, Kudam naeke, and Dehri (hunt-priest), the herbalist medicine-man, the Bonga-doctor or Ojha and the witch-detector on Jan-guru.

Different types of religious functionaires, medicine-man, etc.

Amongst the Santals working in the Daminiko area where they are closely concentrated, it was curious to notice many functionaries named as Ojha, Janguru, Kamruguru, Raranic, Ato-Naike, Kudam Naike and Dehri. The Santal carefully draws a distinction between the officers of his social ceremonials, the high priests of the community and the specialists who may be described in modern terms as the practising physicians and the mental disease experts, the last of course not being psychopathists but masters of spiritualist seances. The sorcerer who practises evil eye and witchcraft is also sharply distinguished.

756 Studying the other allied tribes nearby we find 793 mostly a distinction between the social functionary in 754 charge of religious festivals sharply distinguished 171 from the spirit-doctor generally possessing second sight. [192] The term for the priest is Naya amongst the Birhors and Pahan amongst the Mundas and Oraons. The word Naya as also Naike may have some connection with the

4: Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS

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Hindi word Nayak or leader, a term often used in the old Hindu army for lieutenants. Rai Bahadur Roy shows the Birhor Naya in a plate as Raja or chief[1]. Similarly, the word Pahan may be equated with the Hindi Pradhan or chief. These indicate the power of the religious functionary in the state. It cannot be said, at least from the study of the Chota-Nagpur tribes as well as those of Assam, that the medicine-man developed into the king, for in both the areas we find the temporal chief superior in authority to the ecclesiatic functionary. But the terms themselves show that the religious functionary is given a considerable recognition in temporal status. It is possible Hindu missionaries in bygone days might have exercised temporal and spiritual authority from which these tribes again recovered, re-establishing their own indigenous superiority of their secular chief or headman.

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The term for the spirit-doctor with second sight is Mati among most of the primitive tribes of Chota-Nagpur. The Mundas, the Birhors and the Oraons all call their spirit-doctor Mati, the Hos of Seraikella call him Ojha[2]. The Santal term Ojha has rightly been objected to by Rev. P.O. Bodding as a Hindi loan word derived from Upadhyaya[3]. But we think he goes too far when he says that the whole system of Ojhaism is derived from the Hindus. Similar practices in Hindu society may be sometimes detected in the lowest stratum and also under even the mystic Tantric ritual. They

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[1] S.C. Roy's The Birhor, p. 340, Plate XXVIII.
[2] A Chatterjee and T. Das, Hos. of Seraikella, part I p. 58.
[3] Rev. P.O. Bodding, Studies in Santal disease and Connected Folklore, part I.

4: Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS

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have been always branded in Hindu scriptures as practices of the lowest order, a sort of getting power over ghosts, pisaches and bhuts. The Gita[1] calls the worshippers of the prets and bhuts as tamasic. Thus they are to be looked upon as survival of a pre-Dravidian stage of culture in Hindu Society. From the wide-spread occurrence of the word Mati it would seem that the Santals have lost their own original term and adopted a Hindi loan word as they possibly did in the case of the word for the supreme being, Thakur. The tendency to change the name can be traced amongst the Oraons due to a recent semi-Hindu and semi-aboriginal religious revival movement known as the Bhagat, comparable to the similar Kharwar movement amongst the Santals. The Mati is called Bhagat as the most dignified term for a Baisnab devotee. A change of outlook has also taken place in making the spirits no longer malevolent and the aspect of mercy and grace under Baisnab influence have been emphasised, comparable to the changing of many of the pagan gods of Europe into Roman Catholic patron saints.

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Hunting being one of the most absorbing occupation of all these tribes a special functionary for hunting occasions is quite natural. Amongst the Santals the Dehri still maintains his own; amongst the Birhors the Diguar or Kotowar has sunk to the position of an assistant to the priest Naya.

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यजन्ते सात्त्विका देवान् यक्षरक्षांसि राजसाः ।
प्रेतान् भूतगणांश्चान्ये यजन्ते तामसा जनाः ॥

[1]Chaptar 17, Verse No. 4.

4; Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS

Rev. Bodding gives a detailed description of this theory,[1] where he describes how there is a belief of tejo causing leprosy or hydrophobia, etc., how these tejos enter the body through food, etc. The tejo germs are often believed to be collected by witches for spreading disease amongst people. In the first place naturally the herbalist tries his drugs but this failing the witch-doctor is called.

The Tejo theory of disease falls in line with what Dr. Clements[2] calls disease-object intrusion. Dr. Clements in his study has apparently left out (at least he has not specifically mentioned) the important pre-Dravidian tribes of Chota-Nagpur such as Santals, Hos, Mundas, etc., and thus in his distribution map No. 2 this portion of India is not shaded as it ought to have been. He has shown this idea to be almost universal in the New World and extended up to Siberia. Another area is shown in South-Eastern Asia and the Santal under consideration would show a continuous distribution of this from Chota-Nagpur to the Pacific area. Other centres in Europe, Western Asia and Africa are recorded as being capable of tentative connections with the area of the Santal and South-Eastern Asia. The tejo concept of the Santal is identical with the disease-object intrusion concept in other areas. According to Dr. Clements (to whom the Santal area is unknown) "the criterion is the actual presence in the body of a tangible, supposedly pathogenic substance. Now although the exact nature of this substance varies considerably, such

[1]Rev. P.O. Bodding, Studies in Santal Disease and connected Folklore, Part I, pp. 6-8 Memoirs of the A.S.B., Vol. X, No. 1, pp. 1-132.

[2]Dr. Clements, op. cit., p. 209.

4: Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS

753 variation is quite haphazard. That is to say, there is no
•171 regional differentiation, the most common intruders being small pebbles, bits of leather, sticks, little bones, hairs, coagulated blood, insects, and even small animals.[1]" The idea of dental diseases due to worms in the teeth is not only known in the Santal area but is common in Bengal and perhaps other parts of India, and is treated in India generally by wandering gypsies called 'Bedia' who might have been a distributing agency of this idea in other parts of the Old World. The distribution of the disease-object intrusion concepts in South-Eastern Asia, and perhaps in Western Asia also, may be centered in India if we take the whole as a continuous area of which information has not been collected from some parts of Persia. The old Hindu theory of fever (Jvara) is that it is brought about by a intruding disease-demon (Jvarasur) which finds its way into the body of the afflicted through a disease-object. Could it be suggested that the disease-object intrusion idea was taken up by the Hindu from an earlier surviving primitive concept and incorporated into the systematised medical treatment through which it diffused to Western Asia on the one hand and Indonesia on the other? More knowledge of Chinese and Indian mutual influences on the medical systems of both countries might bridge the gulf between the areas of South-Eastern Asia and Ainu-Sibero-American zone.

753 **(c) Spirit Intrusion and Witchery.**

There is strong belief almost universal amongst the Santals that disease is also caused by the presence in the body of a malevolent bonga, i.e., evil spirits, ghost or demon.

[1] Dr. F.E. Clements, op. cit., p. 211.

4: Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS

ghost or demon. Dr. Clements has drawn rightly a distinction between a spirit intrusion and spirit possession.[1] Amongst the Santals the most respected person would be the Ojha who would work for good, being 'possessed' by a spirit. Whereas all the evils and sorceries are due in their belief to the intrusion of the bongas, often worked to that effect by that most hated and feared human set, the dains or witches. It is further curious to observe how the concepts of sorcery, breach of taboo, and bonga-intrusion have become closely interwoven with each other in Santal thought. The spirit or bonga-intrusion is generally aided by the human agency of the sorceress—but the witch of the intruding malevolent bonga would be powerless to offend unless the victim had committed some breach of taboo. The witch-doctor who is called in aid of the diseased, first of all enquiries[2] carefully about the conduct of the patient so as to find out the nature of the breach of the taboo which has enabled the evil bonga to intrude and then with the help of expiatory rites and superior spirit-aid he drives away the intruding evil bonga.

Spirit intrusion, according to Dr. Clements, is probably considerably later than disease-object intrusion and had undergone considerable diffusion before the full Neolithic period of Western Asia. Clements has further shown that belief in disease causing sorcery is distributed to the ends of the earth. It is of almost universal occurrence in the Old World and extends from the north to the south even in the New World. The basic idea has been suggested to be possibly due to the "Elementargedanken" of Bastian.

[1] Dr. Clements. op. cit., pp. 216-225,

2 [Erratum: this should read "enquires." Cf. errata sheet, category 116, p. ix -- Analyst]

4: Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS

754 171 The mechanism of sorcery in the area is either by magic as amongst the Andamanese or by shooting a magic bow or 'ban' into the victim or extracting some internal parts of the victim as amongst the Australians.

754 Sorcery in the Santal area, according to Bompass, is practised by forms of magic as amongst the Andamanese.[1] The District Gazetteer records how the witches draw the picture of a person to be harmed and the image is then maltreated or symbolically killed by the process of imitative magic. They also would bury tufts of hair with vermilion or sindur which being in contact with the victim's body are subjected to a process of contagious magic and the victim is expected to fall ill.[2]

Similarly, on the authority of Bompass, we know that supernatural agencies or malevolent bongas are directed by witches to kill a man on a certain day, or the witches bring about misfortune on other men by ordering their bonga husband to do so and nagging them on till they commit mischief. Amongst the 754 171 Birhors, Rai Bahadur Roy records how the familiar spirit is directed towards the victim's house towards which the witch throws some rice. The Oraon modus operandi of witchery as recorded so fully by Rai Bahadur Roy brings this area more in line with Australian practices. The employment of the magic arrow or 'ban' is a belief widely distributed in North Eastern India. The magical extraction of the victim's vital organs which among the Australians is the kidney fat, is amongst the

[1]Bompass, Folklore of the Santal Parganas, p. 429.
[2]Bengal District Gazetteer Santal Parganas, p. 123.

4: Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS

Oraons believed to be the heart, whilst amongst the Santals it is supposed to be the liver as our informant told us. Bompass also records an incident where a witch was surprised while extracting the liver from a body in order to eat it.[1] 754 171

Witchery through the evil eye is a belief rampant not only amongst the Santals but amongst other more cultured people of North-East India. It is also found amongst the Birhors, Hos and Oraons.

It is curious to observe how, though the Oraons have both male and female wizards and witches, the Santals ascribe this evil only to women. Their tradition, as recorded by Bompass, fully brings it out : 754 462 539

"Once upon a time Marang Buru (principal diety) decided that he would teach men witchcraft. In those days there was a place at which men used to assemble to meet Marang Buru and hold council with him, but they only heard his voice and never saw his face. One day at the assembly when they met Marang Buru he told them to come to him in their best and cleanest clothes for he would teach them witchcraft. All then went home and told their wives to wash their clothes well against the fixed day as they were going to Marang Buru to learn witchcraft. All the women made a plot to learn it by making their husbands drunk on the appointed day and they then wearing the dress of the males went off to Marang Buru to learn witchcraft in place of their husbands. They then went to Marang

[1]C.H. Bompass, op. cit., p. 421.

[2]C.H. Bompass, op. cit., p. 422.

4; Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS

[P.149]

CHAPER IV

Santal Laws and Government

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It is too early yet to disentangle the various cultural elements which have set their stamp on the village organisation of different parts of India. Socio-economists and students of primitive law are greatly indebted to Prof. Radhakamal Mukherjee for trying to pierce through the veil that surrounds the beginnings of Indian primitive political and judicial institutions by a culture-strata analysis. In his illuminating paper[1] he first of all describes the system in which perhaps most primitive elements have survived such as the Khond type, mainly characterised by tribal system in a village. The second, the more advanced type, is to be found according to him among the Mundas and the Oraons of Chota Nagpur characterised by tribal government and an agrarian distribution under centralised control. A still more advanced type would be that found among village communities of Malabar with democratic tribal traditions overlaid by feudal and monarchical tribal tendencies and found in all complexities amongst the most interesting matriarchal Nayars, though there are many patrirachal tribes in Cochin, Travancore and Coorg. Lastly came the fourth type, the Indo-Aryan. The Munda-Dravidian village constitution is contrasted with the Indo-Aryan system. Later on he has found out another type which he calls Mongoloid (which might be termed the Assam type) and he has further differentiated the Indo-Aryan type from

[1] R.K. Mukerjee, Village Communities in India, Man in India, Vol. III, 1923.pp.1-27.

41 Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS

121 N.W. India into the Afghan and Beluchi sub-types.
174 Thus we have the regional economic types of (1) Assam,
• 171 (2) Chota Nagpur, (3) Malabar, and Madras (4) and N.W. India, which possibly spread over the rest of India along with Aryan conquest and colonisation. It is quite likely that there would be many sub-types in each. In the Festschrift presented to Pater Schmidt, we have a division of the cultural strata of India into the Ur-folk of Palaeolithic time, the Dravidians with Neolithic shoulder-celt culture and the Aryans with copper or iron, succeeding each other chronologically. Giuffrida-Ruggeri's ethnic stratification of India gives us the Negritos, the Australoid Vedda, Dravidians and different Indo-Aryan races succeeding each other chronologically. Prof. Von Eickstedt's classification gives us interesting zonal ethnic types such as (1) the Veddoid, or Palaeo-Indian, the most primitive group with two varieties namely Malidae from Northern jungles and Gondidae from Central Province and Chota Nagpur, and (2) the non-Negroid Melanid group with the sub-type of Kolidae followed by two advanced groups of Indidae and Brachydae.

Thus a cultural analysis of a Santal village administration would pave the way for a clear understanding of the economic and political stratification and their history and evolution in ancient India and what was the real contribution of the Assam, Chota Nagpur or Malabar and Madras or N.W. Indian type to it. The Santal type follows closely what has been described as Mnuda-Oraon constitution; as the Santals are linguistically and culturally, if not physically closely akin to the Mundas, Hos, etc., though the Oraons are linguistically quite different.

St Culshaw M-5 (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

one of the original twelve *khûṭ*. They are not allowed to have spots made on them and they will not be vaccinated, but they may be cicatrized; however, their daughters and sisters are not allowed to be tattooed until after they are married. The unmarried men are not allowed to wear any garment made from jute. They must not plaster their houses with any other than white earth; and they may not draw any pictures on the walls except plantain trees and date palms or figures that look like pictures of temples, drawn with three fingers only. They make their sacrifice at the time of the *Sohrae*; this is performed in the house, and they sacrifice a pig. One year it must be a male uncastrated pig and the next year a female, and if for any reason they cannot get hold of a pig they may sacrifice a black hen. They should sacrifice to their sub-clan spirit in the shelter of a white ant hill,[1] but in these days they bring some earth from the ant hill into the house and sacrifice there."

In a Sarenga schoolboy's essay on the origin of his own clan, he began by relating the creation of mankind and finally continued: "All the Sorens were the soldiers of the Kisku, who were the owners of the village at Campa Gaṛ. The Maṛndi lived at Cirunala, and between the two villages there flowed the Sitanala river. They began to quarrel with each other because the people of the two villages had to use the same river for bathing and for drinking water. Now, since the Soren were the soldiers of the Kisku, they are like the Gurkhas of Nepal. Just as the Gurkhas are fierce and do not fear death, so too the Soren." So is virtue inculcated by fostering pride in the clan. One of the sub-clans of the Soren is the Poita Soren. *Poita* is the word—as pronounced by the Santals—for the sacred thread of the Brahmin. They relate that in the very early days the ancestors of the Soren were celebrating the *Jom Sim* festival and some of the company began to prepare the food and cook it. In imitation of Brahmin cooks they put on sacred threads and served all the people. From that time they became known as Poita Soren. When they sacrifice to their sub-clan spirit they sacrifice to him alone, and the offering has to consist of a male uncastrated pig. The rite is performed at sunrise. They may eat the flesh at any time during that day and the following night, and if they are unable to finish it they must bury it before the following sunrise

[1] For references to the sanctity of white ant hills see *Religion and Folklore of Northern India*, by W. Crooke, C.I.E., p. 380. The belief is widespread in India. "From early times the earth from an ant hill has been regarded as specially pure, representing 'the savour of the earth', and it was, and is, used in building altars."

St Culshaw M-5 (1932-1943) 1949 . AW42 Santal AW42

CHAPTER 8

THE WORLD INVISIBLE—(2)

776 THE tribal *boŋgas* are the allies of the Santals in the struggle against adverse circumstances and untoward happenings, even though their influence is exercised mostly in a negative manner. Common interest as well as sentiment and tradition keep the human and the spirit partners together. There are, however, other kinds of spirits with whom society through its accredited representatives has no dealings. The belief in these latter spirits, the spirits of the malevolent dead and demons, is one which the Santals share with the peasantry of North India.[1] While there is much in the *boŋga* cult that is distinctive of the Santals, they seem to have absorbed the general beliefs of the region regarding spirits that are not worshipped but feared. They use the same terms as their neighbours and speak of *bhut*, *pret* and *curin*. These are the spirits of dead persons who have either died in some abnormal way or whose funeral ceremonies have not been completed. One Santal who was asked to describe the difference between the terms *bhut* and *boŋga* pondered his reply for a minute before saying: "Until the bones have been taken to the river all dead men are *bhuts*. These waylay people in the beds of streams. We fear them, and we do not look after them (*lit.* we do not feed them). We do look after the *boŋgas*, and they work for us." Santals do not seem to have made up their minds whether suicides automatically become malevolent spirits or not. Some think that they do, while one Santal affirmed that as death was rarely ascribed to natural causes suicide was not peculiar, being merely one of the ways in which evil influences worked on men's minds. Childless men become ghosts, and this belief is due to the fact that a son is desired who will light the funeral pyre. The *curin* form a special class of female ghosts with terrifying appearance. They are the spirits of women who died in childbirth, or while they were pregnant and after their child had quickened in the womb, and whose corpses had then not been disposed of in the right manner. Among the Santals, as among many other Indian peoples, the husband is required to cut open his wife's body and remove the foetus from it so that it may be buried separately. *Curin* haunt the beds of streams, where they lie in

775 [171]

766 [171]

[1] William Crooke, *Religion and Folklore of Northern India*, Oxford University Press, 1926, Ch. VII.

St Culshaw M-S (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

wait for men. Women are protected from the designs of these ghosts by the iron bangle which they wear.

Ghosts of the dead and other private spirits who are given the title of *boinga* form part of the stock-in-trade of the two classes of people among the Santals who deal regularly with the occult- the magicians and the witches. They are bitterly opposed to each other's influence, and they clash for the most part on the battleground of sickness and disease. An exhaustive treatise on the Santal attitude to disease has been published, and shows conclusively that, as with ghosts so with sickness, the ideas of the Santals are common to all the lower strata of society in North India.[1] These ideas are not simple but complex, and range from the realm of the rational to the fantastic. Disease is sometimes ascribed to natural causes, particularly when the chain of causation is fairly obvious and can be repeated in a series of experiments; there is a whole class of food described as *batol*, which means that it is unwholesome. There are hundreds of remedies that require no supernatural aid to make them effective. Some remedies are the property of all, while others are the property of individuals and the knowledge of their ingredients is a closely guarded secret. Chaitan of Churimara began his career as a physician in response to a specific need. When he was a young man a friend had come to him in great distress and said that his boy was vomiting blood. He turned to Chaitan and asked him if he knew of any medicine that would be good for the boy. Chaitan was so sorry for his friend that he promised to do something, although when he said this he had no notion what he should do. As he was setting out for his friend's house he prayed to *Cando* and asked that he might be shown what he ought to do; at the same time he shut his eyes and kicked at the soil. As he opened his eyes again he saw a plant, which he immediately dug up. He ground the roots to make a medicine, and the boy recovered from his sickness. Since then he has applied the same remedy to many other cases. One of his patients had been extremely ill, he said, but was now the father of four or five children! He has been in great demand as a physician, and claims that *Cando* subsequently revealed many remedies to him. Sometimes it is claimed that remedies are made known in dreams. The plant that was first revealed to Chaitan was the *upel lendi* plant, which has a red flower.

[1] P. O. Bodding, *Studies in Santal Medicine and Connected Folklore*, *Memoirs of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal*, Vol. X.

St Culshaw M-S (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

to leave. On one occasion I was informed that a woman had been killed as a suspected witch, but it was impossible to make a satisfactory investigation; and on another occasion I was asked to see the body of a young man where the villagers were convinced that witchcraft had been responsible for his death. It appeared to be a case of poisoning. Fortunately, some of the evidence relating to witchcraft and murder has been documented. Murder by Santals is comparatively rare, but fear of witchcraft is one of the most frequent motives at work. Statistics have been published for the Santal Parganas for the period 1931-40. During this period there were seventy-eight cases of homicide by Santals before the courts, and of the seventy-eight it was definitely established that sixteen were due to accusations of witchcraft.[1] It is reasonable to infer that the actual number was somewhat larger, for in most such cases the sympathy of the community is on the side of the murderers, and so it becomes a fairly easy matter to conceal the crime.

It appears that in other parts of North India the magician, or *ojha*, is a dealer in "black magic",[2] but among the Santals the order of *ojhas* might almost seem to have been called into being because of the need to defend society against the evil influence and the sorcery of witches who are the enemies of society. The *ojha* is a benefactor of society and seeks to overcome witchcraft by invading the territory of the witches and using their weapons. Each of the opposing camps is prepared to lay hands on any weapon that may serve its purpose.

The same truth is evident in all the Santal's dealings with things that he cannot understand. The attitudes summed up in the terms "magic" and "religion" are both in evidence. It is not usual in these days to distinguish sharply between them.[3] Magic is used by the Santal as a tool to accomplish many and varied ends. It is not absent from his dealings with the spirits, and it can be used for social as well as antisocial ends. It does

[1] S. M. Naqavi, "Santal Murders", an article in *Man in India*, September 1943, Vol. XXIII.

[2] W. Crooke, *op. cit.*, p. 443: "In Northern India the worker of black magic is the Ojha, a term derived from the Sanskrit Upādhāya, 'teacher', and the Syāna, 'cunning man', who follow the traditional methods handed down from their predecessors. Their stock-in-trade is a collection of Mantras or spells, many based on the magic of the Tantras, 'rule, ritual', used in the cult of the Sakti or female energy, by which they are supposed to acquire the power of controlling spirits or demons, and of forcing them to obey the orders of the sorcerer."

[3] Cf. G. and M. Wilson, *The Analysis of Social Change*, Cambridge University Press, 1945, p. 72: "Magic for us, though it may not postulate any transcendent reality, is an integral part of primitive religion."

St Culshaw M-5 (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

some thirty miles from Sarenga. This fair, which is one of the most famous in Western Bengal, takes place at the time of the Dol Jatra near a temple dedicated to Krishna. The last day of the *mela* is chiefly renowned for the fact that on that day there is a great concourse of Santals for dancing.

One festival which is shared with tribes living right across Central India[1] is the *Karam*. The fact that it is not peculiar to them is known to the Santals, and one informant once told me that they must have borrowed it from the Mahato. He had seen that the Mahato celebrated it and knew of the special relationship between the Mahato and his own people. Many of the songs contain references to Ram and Lokhon, heroes of the *Ramayana*. The festival is rather difficult to characterize, for its celebration takes different forms and arises from different causes. It is connected in all cases with the desire for prosperity, but it may be either a public or a private celebration. The *karam* is a tree[2] that is associated with the god Krishna in the *Vishnu Purana*. When a shoot of this tree is found growing in the land round a house or springing from the roof thatch, the head of that house is responsible for instituting an annual celebration of the festival. The fact that while it is celebrated annually in a great many villages it is not found invariably is perhaps accounted for by its accidental origin. The festival is also associated with certain other definite events. In some cases the leading celebrant is the local *ojha*, who holds a *Karam* festival at the beginning of the month of *Dāsāē* and before he sends out his disciples on their annual begging expedition. Sometimes it is celebrated in connection with the appointment of the new headman of a village, and sometimes in connection with the death ceremonies of a man of substance. Sometimes it is associated with the *Mak' Möñ'*, an occasional sacrifice to the "Five". These spirits are peculiarly liable to become offended, and offerings are made to them to avert their wrath, which takes the form of inflicting a poor harvest or an epidemic. Whatever the occasion may be, the celebration of the *Karam* is regarded as an insurance either on behalf of a particular family or on behalf of the whole village. It may be either a way of enhancing good fortune or of warding off evil. Where in the area it has become an annual festival it is held at the full moon in the month of *Sun* (July-August). At sunset the un-

[1] References to Central India are to be found in *Folk-Songs of the Maikal Hills*, by V. Elwin, Oxford University Press, pp. 3-11.

[2] *Adinia cordifolia*, Hook., f. and B.

St Culshaw M-5 (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

law", comes to live there. This arrangement is common to all agricultural communities in Bengal. Among the Santals no bride price has to be paid, and in some instances the marriage ceremony is postponed till the end of a trial period during which the youth lives in the home of his future father-in-law and works for him without wages. He is accepted as the girl's husband when he is known to be a good worker, and thereby he also establishes his claim to receiving a portion of the land when his father-in-law dies. He does not change his clan, for this he cannot do, but he and his heirs can inherit from his wife's father. Hence this form of marriage furnishes the only exception to the rule that land must not pass out of the possession of the clan.

The term for divorce comes from the symbolic act that accompanies it. It is *sakam orec'*, or "leaf tearing". There are two sufficient reasons for a man to divorce his wife. The first is infidelity and the second is witchcraft. As marriage is a contract that involves two villages, representatives of both villages are summoned to sanction the divorce. The bride's father is compelled to return the bride price and the husband makes formal declaration of the divorce. He takes a *sarjom* leaf between his hands and tears it down the centre in token of the dissolution of the marriage tie. Then he has to provide a meal for those who have been summoned to the council. Owing to the fact that the bride price has to be repaid to the husband's family, the parents of the bride frequently object to the action, and where the guilt of the wife requires to be proved the proceedings may drag on for several months. If her parents can show that some blame attaches to the husband they can retain the bride price, and this they usually wish to do even when they do not desire their daughter to be reinstated in her husband's home. Until the bride price has been repaid the formal dissolution cannot take place.

A wife cannot formally divorce her husband, but she can, and sometimes does, refuse to continue to live with him. The problem of the runaway wife is one that is continually exercising the Santal village community, a fact that suggests the existence of many underlying strains. The mother-in-law is frequently blamed. In one family well known to me the wife of the younger son ran to her own home during the cultivation season in several successive years. At that time her presence was greatly needed to help with the fields, and she asserted her rights by running away. Her own explanation was that her mother-in-law made her work too hard and did not give her enough to eat. She remained with her own parents, who were not unwilling to feed

St Culshaw M-S (1902-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

DEATH

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When a person is dying inside a house a great effort is made to remove him into the open before the *jiri* departs, for otherwise it will have difficulty in leaving the house, but the concern felt in this case is probably more on behalf of the living than the dead. The road by which the soul leaves the body is not known with certainty, for in addition to the nose or mouth it may depart through the ears, or, as I was informed in a case where a girl had died with her eyes staring wide open, "Her *jiri* went out through her eyes." Some of the ideas current about the future life have a moral content. There is at least an aspiration that the inequalities of this life will be rectified in the next. In the folk-tale quoted above[1] the boon was granted, and to the comfort of the woman who asked the questions she saw the soul of a poor man being treated with great respect, while the soul of a rich man, in this case her own father-in-law, was very roughly handled. Many such stories are told about the souls of Brahmins and men of low castes. Ideas are also held about punishment in the future life. This is reserved for those who have gone scot-free in this world. Those who were greedy are made to carry baskets of dung on their heads. Special tortures are also in store for those who wilfully shirk the payment of their debts, and above all for those who transgress the tribal code of sexual morality as well as for those who fail to show the traditional tribal marks on their bodies.

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538

It would be surprising if any people in India did not show some trace of belief in reincarnation. The Santals accept it in a general way, but it has no great hold on their thinking. Hutton has inferred that the belief in reincarnation in India is a development from the theory of soul-matter or material life-substance of which he has found evidence through examining the cult of the dead among the hill tribes of Assam.[2] There is no need to hark back to such origins to account for the vague belief in reincarnation that is held by Santals at the present day. Every Indian village is able to furnish stories of recognition and memory which "prove" to the satisfaction of the villagers the assertion that men return to this earth in a different form after death, thus popularizing the doctrine of *karma*, which is one of the few beliefs universally accepted by Hindus and is one of the great achievements of Hindu thought. The Santals are surrounded by this atmosphere; accepting it, they repeat the stories which they hear and add others to the common stock. The

114 171

[1] See page 198.

[2] J. H. Hutton, *Census Report of India*, 1931, Vol. I, Ch. XI.